

CASE INSIGHT 4.1

The i to i research agency conducted market research to help the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) win public support during the bid process for London to hold the Games in 2012. We speak to CEO, Claire Spencer, to find out more.

Since the creation of the Olympic Movement in 1894, Britain has been a strong protagonist, playing host to the Games in 1908 and 1948, and sending hundreds of British Olympians to compete. In the intervening years, Britain made two unsuccessful bids before London was nominated Official Candidate City for the 2012 Games in May 2004. In 2004 and 2005, the London organization produced a compelling case for London to host the 2012 Olympic Games in what Mike Lee, Director of Communications, called the 'most competitive ever bidding procedure mounted by the IOC'.

It was crucial that the London 2012 team convinced the 117-strong International Olympic Committee (IOC) voting members that London had the potential to deliver on the five selection criteria: i) the best Olympic Plan; ii) low-risk delivery; iii) an enthusiastic country; iv) clear benefits of holding the Games in London; v) a professional, likeable, and trustworthy team. In order to persuade the 117 IOC members that London met the five selection criteria, the London 2012 organization embarked on a large-scale communications programme both internationally and within the UK.

However, London was challenged with one particular selection criterion: the Games had to be held by an 'enthusiastic country', which, quite frankly, it had not been. Compared to the level of public support for the Games in competing cities (Paris, Moscow, New York, and Madrid), London's enthusiasm was low. With public support hovering around the 60–70% mark, there was always the question of what did the other



Claire Spencer for i to i research

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30–40% think? LOCOG felt that there was a need to commission marketing research to help them develop a communication campaign to generate a more enthusiastic public, partly by encouraging the public to register their support for the bid by petition. Specifically, the research would need to aid evaluation of LOCOG's communication campaign in terms of: 1) were the right messages being communicated to engender support and registration for London to host the Games? 2) which part of the campaign was working/not working in terms of, for example, advertising (which media), and PR (which stories)?

If you were creating the research programme for the LOCOG bid team to help them improve London's support for the bid, how would you design it?